

unapproved
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 11, 2009

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Thursday, May 11, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

Present from Council: Cascio, Console, Forrest, Hemmann, Kotkin, Roberts, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Montinieri, and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Finance Director; Michael Kohlhausen, Superintendent of Schools; RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk, and Amy Bello, Assistant Town Clerk

Bonnie Therrien said that the mill rate now stands at 30.79 mills. She said that there are still Assessment court appeals coming in daily. She said that she budgeted a \$1,000,000 in the reduction of the grand list for court appeals. She said that the Council may want to adjust the number.

Lisa Hancock said that both commercial and residential property owners are appealing. The number could go as high as \$2,500,000. There is no way to know. She said that the mill rate would change to 30.81 mills if the Council changed the number to \$2,500,000. The grand list is \$2,310,000,000.

Councilor Kotkin asked how many appeals have come in so far and what would be the reduction in the grand list if the court sided with all of the property owners.

Bonnie Therrien said that she does not have those numbers.

Councilor Kotkin said that he would like to have a list of all the properties for June 1st so that the Town Council can know the potential loss to the grand list.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – UNION NEGOTIATIONS

At 5:55 p.m., Councilor Kotkin moved **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS UNION NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor Walsh. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 6:15 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECESS THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Walsh. Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 6:40 p.m., Councilor Console moved **“TO GO BACK INTO SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Walsh. Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Bonnie Therrien said that it would cost \$30,233 to reinstate the 7 part-time positions to their full hours.

Councilor Cascio moved **“BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON APRIL 2, 2009 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

TO ADD \$30,233 TO REINSTATE THE HOURS OF ALL THE PART-TIME SECRETARIAL POSITIONS THAT WERE REDUCED” seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Cascio said that this will help all employees and will provide a better level of service.

All Councilors present, included the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Chairperson Adil asked the Superintendent for a report on union concessions on the Board side.

Michael Kohlhausen, Superintendent of Schools, said that the Mayor, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Education met with union leadership. They have received a definitive response from the teachers, and the secretarial/clerical unions for 2 furlough days. The custodian union is meeting tomorrow to vote. He is cautiously optimistic that they too will make concessions. The 2 furlough days will net a \$300,000 savings.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, said that the Town side has also agreed to concessions. The police can't do furlough days but have made other concessions. She thanked all of the unions for their help.

Michael Kohlhausen thanked the Mayor for his participation in the meetings.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON APRIL 2, 2009 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

TO REDUCE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET BY \$300,000 BASED ON THE PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION BY THE SUPERINTENDENT” seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

Councilor Cascio said that this is his 20th budget session and he has never seen 2 furlough days agreed to by all of the unions. He is hopeful that when the State budget is adopted, the Town may be able to return some of the money back to the employees.

Councilor Roberts said that everyone on the Town Council sincerely appreciates the efforts of all Town employees. She thanked the Town Manager and Superintendent for their leadership. This was a unified effort.

Michael Kohlhausen said that the actual amount to reduce the Board of Education budget is \$253,700, the difference between the 2 furlough days and reinstating some positions. It does not include the administrative furlough days that were already reduced from the budget.

There was a discussion on what the correct number was that the budget should be reduced by.

At 6:55 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO RECESS THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 7:00 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO REENTER THE MEETING”** seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“TO AMEND HIS MOTION - BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON APRIL 2, 2009 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

TO REDUCE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET BY \$251,682” seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, included the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Forrest asked if this number included the custodial bargaining unit’s concessions.

Michael Kohlhausen said that it did.

Councilor Forrest said that this budget shows a great sense of community. Many Board staff also live in Town. All employees have come together during this budget process. He is proud to be from Wethersfield.

Councilor Walsh said that he echoed the comments heard tonight. He thanked the Town Manager and Superintendent for their work to bring the unions on board. He thanked the staff and said that he appreciates everyone’s efforts.

Councilor Hemmann said that in the early 1990’s, when times were tough, things didn’t come together like they did this year. She appreciates the work this time. It says a lot about the Town and Board of Education staff.

Councilor Kotkin said that 425 of the 725 employees of the Board of Education are tax payers. That says something about the Town. The Town was able to achieve a balance with this budget.

Councilor Cascio asked how the furlough days would work on the Board side.

Michael Kohlhagen said that the unions need to finalize the concessions. He said that there will be no staff reductions and he will notify all non tenured teachers that they will be hired back. There will be two furlough days, one on August 27th and one on August 31st. The staff year will go from 187 days to 185 days. The furlough days will be taken over all pay periods throughout the year to minimize the impact.

Chairperson Adil said that these are tough times and the Town Council and Board of Education have done a thorough job with the budget. All employees have stepped up to the plate. He commended both the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools for their work. He said that he feels badly for staff that did not retain their positions.

Councilor Console moved **“BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON APRIL 2, 2009 BE AND HEREBY IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

TO CUT \$85,000 AND CORRESPONDING FRINGE BENEFITS FROM THE TOWN-SIDE OF THE BUDGET” seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

Councilor Console thanked the Town Manager and said that she went above and beyond in many areas to keep the Town running without any drastic cuts.

All Councilors present, included the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

TRANSFER OF \$33,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO ACCOUNT #4100-54425-3010 - VIDEO SOUND SYSTEM – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Councilor Roberts moved **“TO TRANSFER \$33,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO ACCOUNT #4100-54425-2010 –VIDEO SOUND SYSTEM – COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND TO AWARD THE BID TO HP”** seconded by Councilor Walsh.

Bonnie Therrien said that this will improve the sound system in the Council Chambers. It will take a month from receipt of contract to have the equipment installed. The contract includes the installation and warranty.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 7:16 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO TAKE A SHORT RECESS”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

At 7:39 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **“TO GO BACK INTO SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADOPTION OF THE 2009-2010 BUDGET

Deputy Mayor Montinieri moved **“THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL ADOPT THE TOWN BUDGET AS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON APRIL 2, 2009 AND AS AMENDED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, IN THE SUM OF \$ 31,890,283 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Forrest.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Kotkin moved **“THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR LIBRARY PURPOSES BE SET AT \$ 1,609,508 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Roberts moved **“THAT THE TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES BE SET AT \$ 48,938,707 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Console.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Walsh moved **“THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXES FOR THE TOWN, LIBRARY, AND SCHOOL PURPOSES COMBINED BE SET AT \$ 70,700,771 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Montinieri.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Forrest moved **“THAT THE TAX RATE ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL TAXABLE PROPERTY BE SET AT 30.68 MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009”** seconded by Councilor Hemmann.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Console. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk